

exactly what I should do as a citizen in the next 5 weeks to do right by my country in the 21st century.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 p.m. in Room 202 at Philadelphia City Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Edward Rendell of Philadelphia; and State Senator Vincent Fumo. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

October 3, 1998

Good morning. This week I announced that we've closed the book on nearly three decades of deficits. Today I want to talk about another challenge we must face to keep our economy and our Nation growing strong: protecting America's farmers and ranchers.

For nearly 6 years now, strengthening our economy has been my top priority as President. Today, because of the hard work of the American people, these are good times for our country, with nearly 17 million new jobs, wages rising, the lowest unemployment in nearly 30 years, the lowest inflation in more than 30 years.

But for the farmers and ranchers whose hard work has helped to build our new prosperity, times are not as good. In fact, America's farms are facing the worst crisis in more than a decade. This year flood and drought and crop disease have wiped out entire harvests. Plummeting prices here at home and collapsing markets in Asia have threatened the livelihood of entire communities.

Many farmers will see their net income this year drop by as much as 40 percent below a 5-year average. Farm failures have become so common that in some parts of our country trained farm auctioneers have been brought out of retirement. Families who have farmed the same land for generations are giving up and moving to town.

We've already taken steps to help farmers and ranchers weather the crisis. In August I signed new legislation to speed up farm program payments. Next week we'll purchase another allotment of the \$250 million of wheat we pledged to buy to feed hungry peo-

ple around the world and help our farmers here at home. And I've directed Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman to do everything within his authority to help farmers who have suffered significant losses and to give them the resources they need now to plan next spring's crops. But with crop and livestock prices still dropping, with foreign markets still in danger of collapse, with family farms still in jeopardy, we know we must do more.

As we near the end of the legislative session and finish our work on the budget, we have a real opportunity to protect our farmers. The strict budget rules permit special measures for one-time emergencies. And make no mistake, for America's farm families this is a real emergency, as harmful as a hurricane, a flood, or a riot.

So this summer, I sent a proposal to Congress for emergency aid for our farmers, and I backed a proposal by Senators Harkin and Daschle to lift the cap on marketing loan rates for one year. Since then, we've strengthened our proposal to help hundreds of thousands of farmers while honoring the budget rules.

Congress is now considering a package which, though it adopts many of the protections we've proposed, still does not do enough for farmers who are suffering from the lowest prices in decades. I call on Congress not to leave town before they've sent me a comprehensive plan that protects farmers by strengthening the safety net at this very difficult time.

With Congress in town for just a few more days, we must take another critical step to help our farmers and ranchers who rely on exports to make a living and support their families. Farm products from one of every three acres planted in America are sold abroad. And when those markets stumble, our farmers take a fall, too.

Just this week the New York Times ran a story that described the tons of wheat, apples, and other farm goods piling up on our docks because Asian customers can no longer afford them. That is why we must give the International Monetary Fund the resources it needs to help our customers in Asia so that they can continue to buy our farm products.

Congress has had months and months to create a stronger IMF, better able to deal with the most serious financial challenge the world has faced in 50 years. Now, each day Congress delays on IMF, our farmers, our ranchers, our economy, our future suffer.

It's way past time for Congress to act on the IMF and do the right thing for our farmers. Our farming families are the lifeblood of our land or, as President Franklin Roosevelt once called them, "the source from which the reservoirs of our Nation's strength are constantly renewed."

We cannot afford to let them fail. And with these steps, we will strengthen and support our farms and our farm families, just as they have sustained us throughout our history.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:51 p.m. on October 2 at the Wyndham Hotel in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 3. This transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 2 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks at a Unity '98 Luncheon *October 5, 1998*

Thank you very much. Let me begin by saying that we decided, Tom and Dick and I, after we found ourselves in the minority in 1995 and we were facing the Republican contract on America, that if we stayed together, that our policy positions could prevail and that what we wanted to do for the country would be much more difficult to do but that we could still get a lot of it done.

And we had that terrible experience of the Government shutdown in late '95 and '96. But after that, when the American people made their voices heard, we had a good election in '96. We had a balanced budget agreement, which closed the remaining 8 percent of the gap in balancing the budget, but importantly, should give us a balanced budget for years and years to come, with a lot of our priorities in it, including health care for 5 million kids and the widest opening of the doors of college since the GI bill. None of that would have happened if we hadn't worked together. And I could not have done any of it if it hadn't been for the Democrats

in the House and the Senate. I think that's very important.

We are seeing the potential of a replay of that now, as we get closer and closer to the election and the feelings of the American people become apparent. In a few days I'll get a chance to sign a higher education bill which has a big drop in the interest rates on student loans and a program to provide mentors for inner-city kids in their junior high school years or middle school years that will include a guarantee of access to funds to go to college, if they stay out of trouble, stay in school, and learn.

These things would absolutely be impossible in the present array of Congress with the Republicans in the majority, if we weren't working together. So there is a substantive benefit to that.

Now, let me say where we are now is a position that I think is virtually unprecedented in 150 years. In 150 years of American political history, the President's party in the midterm elections nearly always lose, and in the second term of the President, I don't think there's an exception. But we are on the verge of having an exception, and I would like to tell you why and why I think your investment is well made.

Normally, these midterm elections have a big fall-off in voter turnout. And that is the assumption and, indeed, what our opponents are literally working for and hoping for and praying for, because a lot of the people that vote for us would never be able to come into a home like this except to maybe serve lunch. And it's a big hassle for a lot of them to vote; you know, they have to worry about child care and the job and getting to vote and all that.

When I was in Philadelphia with Peter and others a couple of days ago, a friend of mine from New Jersey came over and brought me a survey that had just been done in New Jersey asking people if in the current climate they were more or less likely to vote in the midterm elections. Fifty percent said they were more likely. Ten percent said they were less likely. Fifty percent of the Republicans said they were more likely—49 percent of the Democrats—I mean, 49 percent of the independents, 57 percent of the Democrats said they were more likely to go and vote.